

British and Continental Federation for the abolition of
Government regulation of prostitution.

29
P.S. we sail on Saturday next
July 1 in the City of Berlin.

1875.

~~27, Great George Street,
Westminster, London,
and 348, Park Road,
Liverpool.~~

Astor House, Broadway, New York, 27 June, 1876.

My dear Sir,

When I had the pleasure of seeing you at Boston you kindly said that the friends in America who sympathize with the efforts now being made in England to abolish legalized prostitution both in that country and all over Europe, were wishful to make England aware of their feelings, and also to offer such encouragement as they could give, and you desired Mr. Wilson & myself to inform you of the way in which it would be possible to do this so as to help the cause of righteousness the most efficiently. Your wishes should have had far earlier attention than they have received, had not our time been overburdened with public engagements, which, for the sake of the diffusion of information in your country, it was absolutely necessary we should meet. — We need hardly assure you that the simple fact of England's having the sympathy in this struggle of a number of men & women who have themselves just emerged from the smoke and dust of one of the greatest battles of all

time will be wonderfully encouraging. To be addressed by the combatants
for night who, with their holy cause, survive, will be felt to be an
omen for good. We are confident of the rightness and soundness
of the principles for which we are contending, and it will be a
profound satisfaction to know that you and your friends share
that confidence with us. We believe that by this system of legal-
izing prostitution our country has been dishonoured & degraded;
the high functions of the State have been made mean & contemptible
ministers to the lust and cowardice and cruelty of wicked men.
Instead of guarding all moral and religious obligations of men
towards each other, the State has been made to slight them, &
to appear as the patron of licentious irregularities. It is this
guilty complicity with wrong doing which most deeply touches
our heart and conscience; and the more so, because many
good people, who might be expected to think and feel
the same way, are apathetic or are positively on the side of the
complicity. Now, you and your ^{anti-slavery} friends know what a contribution
on first principles means; this time you are calm specta-
tors, not combatants, & you can cheer us by saying, that you
believe, with a deep and full persuasion, that we are right.

Then again, we are plagued with proposals to substitute
some other form of this legislation for the one against which
we are working; but our reply always is, that a bad prin-
ciple can have no right application. Forms are but forms,

principles are life and power; and we are contending for a divine principle and against an immoral one. Our demand of the government is for the total, immediate, and unconditional repeal of the hateful laws known as the Contagious Diseases Acts. We are afraid to commit ourselves and their country to the guidance and protection of a sound principle, because in the working out of it hardship may have to be encountered, and patience may be needed for many a weary year. They want some present relief; they want an unpleasant thing removed out of sight, though not out of existence. All the perils of this temporising are familiar to you; and if you think we ought to go for root and branch measures, if you think it would be right and safe, pray say so.

Your position and experience enable you to speak with particular weight upon the danger to a nation of having in its midst a class of people without legal rights, singled against, treated as bad and hypocrites, and almost-compelled to remain where they are, and as they are. Our free constitution is violated by the means adopted to place prostitutes under regulation; the comfort and even safety of poor and friendless virtuous women are endangered; when once prostitutes are under the Acts they constitute a legalised class of wrong doers. They are robbed of their higher rights as women and citizens, and then invested with shameful privileges as prostitutes. America has suffered for her wrongs done to the slaves quite as much,

time
 for a
 number
 of
 prop
 that
 is in
 the
 min
 In
 the
 to
 gun
 on
 go
 the
 co
 on
 to
 be
 so
 we
 c

State it, as the slaves themselves suffered; and your testimony on this point would greatly strengthen our hands in our protest against treating fallen women as if they had no rights, and must always, perforce of law, remain vicious and outcast.

It will be an unspeakable relief to English workers to be assured that American friends will jealously watch all attempts in all quarters to make the U. S. similar to Europe in the legalization of wrong-doing. The U. S. are safe at present; we would fain be free from anxiety on their account, and we shall be so, if we know that the lovers of purity and freedom, in all parts of their broad dominion, are awake, watchful, and resolute, not slumbering in a vain confidence. Tell us that you hope soon to see England in her old position by your side; that you applaud the determination of some of her people to see every European country liberated from this bondage; and that America will aid them by every means in her power.

You know the difficult, but noble and praiseworthy position taken by many English women in this conflict, and they, above all workers, deserve your encouraging sympathy; for they have done the most, and they have done it in the teeth of bitter opposition. Every thing that is purest and most precious to a good woman has been dedicated by them to the salvation of the fallen and to the protection of others who are virtuous but endangered, and then heartless men have scoffed at the

sacrifice and questioned the purity of its inspiring motive. Our wives and sisters are not daunted by such cowardly attacks, which, happily, are becoming less frequent and less violent; but you are agree with Mr. Wilson and me that this conspicuous feature of our enterprise, the ~~agency~~^{advocacy} of women, well deserves special mention. To exaggerate the importance of Mrs. Butler's services would be impossible. Even you, at a distance of 3000 miles, feel the fascination of her marvellous influence; the power of her fine, clear intellect; the subduing, controlling, inspiring force of her faith in God, and of her love of the women who are sinners. All this is thoroughly appreciated by you, and if you with the best English people know what estimate you have formed of it, you would render to woman's work an honour which is simply its due, and do woman's cause a lasting service.

Mr. Wilson & I are returning to England thankful for having had the opportunity of seeing and addressing so many American friends on the subject which was committed to our charge. We will include the confidence that our labours, though most inadequate, will bear good fruit in coming days. Among the pleasantest recollections of our American visit that we shall carry home with us will be the recollection of the time we were permitted to spend in your company. With much respect from both of us, believe me, Dear Sir, Yours faithfully
William Lloyd Garrison, Esq. J. P. Medstone.